MMR_0186 Charles L. Dischinger Mid-Continent Region Ozark Mountain Area

I graduated from Missouri State University in ’71 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Layout and Design. My intention was to follow in the footsteps of my father who was a freelance commercial artist who specialized in photo retouching. Art was what I grew up with and working for my father since I was in grade school, I had the equivalent of about two years practical experience even before I began taking college classes.

After graduation, circumstances kept me from moving back to St. Louis to begin working as an artist. However, my first job as an artist at MWM Colorpress in Aurora, Mo. was a wonderful opportunity to work in a printing plant that could do every step of a printing job from the layout and design to the final binding of the printed page. They also had their own photography studio to take necessary picture for catalogs and other printed material. It was a great place to work and I really felt appreciated receiving my first promotion on my first day when they learned I knew how to specify type.

However, the money was not there and when the opportunity came to work for the railroad, it was hard to resist my long time child hood fascination with trains. Initially, railroading was suppose to be a temporary job until my wife graduated from Missouri State with her degree, but a funny thing happened, I ended up making a 34 year career of working as a Hostler, Locomotive Engineer and Yardmaster.

During that railroad career, I managed to fulfill my artistic abilities; first by model railroading and earning my Master Model Railroader Certification from the National Model Railroad Association for display superior achievement in craftsmanship and service to the hobby and second with my interest in photography.

My photography first appeared commercially in the former Frisco Railroad's company magazine "allaboard." Since that time, my photographs have appeared in "Trains", "Railfan & Railroad", CTC Board", "Model Railroader", "Railroad Model Craftsman", the BNSF company magazine "Railway" and many others.

They have also appeared on numerous calendars for the BN and BNSF Railroads, McMillan Publications and GE. In addition, my photography has won numerous awards in various national competitions.

My artistic abilities have also been put to use in producing numerous projects for the BN and BNSF Railroad by producing educational material and editing a Division newsletter. My work was setting the standards for the rest of the railroad to strive for. I have also edited and produced, the newsletter for the Frisco Modelers Information Group (The modeling and historical society of the former Frisco Railroad.)

In addition to my achievements in the realm of graphics, the one thing I am the most proud of being a part of, has been the creation of the Santa Claus Express Christmas Train which ran in the 1990's. I won't begin to take all of the credit for its creation, because I found myself working with a very talented, devoted and creative group of professional railroaders who volunteered thousands of hours to create one of the most amazing and wonderful holiday traditions in the Ozarks.

They took my initial concept and expanded it beyond even my wildest imagination. It was something one had to experience to fully appreciate and be believed. It was simply a magical experience.

Since my retirement from the BNSF Railway, I have continued to pursue my interests in photography and expanding my capabilities in the digital graphic era. I also volunteer at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, where I enjoy working with and talking to school kids about what it was like to be at Wilson's Creek on August 10th, 1861 during the battle. I have also been active working on various graphic projects as needed.

NOTE: This bio was taken from Charlie's website, "Railway Graphics Services (in June 2024)." (John Coy, MMR 730)